With a view to complete irrigation projects in time bound manner so that benefits from locked up investments can be accrued at the earliest Government of India is providing Central Loan Assistance (CLA) to the State Governments for selected ongoing major and medium irrigation projects under Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) which was launched in the year 1996-97. Under AIBP, CLA amounting to Rs. 96,8.193 crore has been released so far to 11 major and medium irrigation projects of Gujarat. The Government of Gujarat is required to ensure release of the State's own share immediately after the central fund is received by the State and the effective utilisation of the funds for creation of potential.

Reforms in Water Policy

3961 SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Water pricing authority proposed" as published in the Times of India dated 2nd December, 1999;

(b) if so. whether the National Commission on Water Resources has recommended reforms and changes in the laws relating to water policy,

(c) if so, the details of recommendations made by the Commission, and

(d) to what extent Government have accepted the recommendations and changes in the proposed water pricing authority have been made ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development has recommended for enactment of a law on Inter-State rivers to be called the Inter-State Rivers and River Valley (Integrated and Participatory Management) Act to *interalia* provide for (i) the constitution of River Basin Organisation and for their powers and functions and (ii) data collection and studies to be made by Union for possible Inter-State inter-basin transfer. It has also recommended to amend the Inter State Water Disputes Act, 1956 to ensure that awards of Inter-State water tribunals are given within a resonable period of time as also for the effectiveness of such awards. It has emphasised the need for revising the National Water Policy, 1987.

(c) Statement is attached (See below)

(d) An implementation Cell in the National Water Development Agency has been constituted to examine recommendations of the National Commission, including the recommendation regarding water pricing authority, and suggest to union Government about the implementability or other-wise of the recommendations and to suggest modalities for implementation of such recommendations, as found implementable. An Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Central Water Commission has been constituted for assisting the implementation Cell in examining the recommendations.

STATEMENT

The main recommendations of the National Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development are as under :—

1. Continued Government funding on enhanced scale for major projects, instilling financial discipline and prioritisation of projects for channelising the funds. Central assistance to major projects to be project-wise instead of being part of the overall plan assistance.
2. Need for well laid down compensation packages for all categories of project affected persons. While doing so, the Commission has emphasised that resettlement and rehabilitation projects be implemented by a functional authority with sufficient funds.
3. Need for amending the existing Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956, enactment of a new Act *in lieu* of the existing River Board's Act, 1956, and also amending the existing Irrigation Acts which would facilitate participatory irrigation management.
4. Optimal utilisation of land and water should be aimed at in basins having surplus before considering interbasin transfers (intrabasin transfer to be given first priority).
5. Setting up of River Basin Organisation for each Inter-State River having representation from the concerned State Governments, Water Users etc.
6. Substantial revision of present water rates to cover the entire operation & maintainance expenses, constituting Water Pricing Authority on the analogy of existing Energy Pricing Authorities.

7. For Environment protection, the principle of "User Pays, Polluter Pays" need to be adopted for industrial uses.

8. Need for reviewing the National Water Policy (1987), need for making hydrological data for all basins freely available to all interested.

9. For flood control measures, Commission has recommended preparation of disaster preparedness plans, performance review of embankments and policy to regulate the land use in different flood zones. Existing flood forcecasting system be strengthened and modernised using telemetry and satellite communication.

10. For optimal and integrated development of trans—Himalayan rivers, India should work for cooperation amongst the neighbouring countries. For this purpose, it has been suggested that National Water Development Agency (NWDA) in India, Water Resource Planning Organisations (WARPO) in Bangladesh and Energy Development Authority (EDA) in Nepal be designated to interact as a clearing house of information.

11. For hydropower development, Commission has recommended creation of hydropower development fund, promotion of joint ventures, tariff rationalisation etc.

12. For navigation development, the Commission has recommended that Inland Water Transport be treated as a nascent industry.